

of the dorsal surface which has a general black hue due to the black tips of the spines. The few spines which are found in the area under consideration are also tipped with apricot-buff like the hairs. The spineless area gradually passes into more posterior parts where the spines again preponderate over the hairs.

The body measurements in the fresh state are wanting. The tail is broken but healed up leaving a short stump behind. As compared with the skull of one of the specimens collected later (in the other it is damaged), the skull of the abnormal specimen is slightly smaller and has its molar crowns less worn out, thereby indicating its younger age. There appears to be every justification to consider the specimen as only an abnormal individual of the form; but, at present, no plausible explanation can be given as to the cause of disappearance of spines on a particular part of the body.

ZOOLOGICAL SURVEY OF INDIA,
INDIAN MUSEUM, CALCUTTA,
5th November, 1950.

H. KHAJURIA

[The attention of the Zoological Survey of India was drawn to the fact that the original specimen was sent to the British Museum where it was identified as *Mus phillipsi fernandoni* (of which they had only 2 skins and 2 skulls for comparison) but with rather unusual pelage.

Dr. B. S. Chauhan replied that the Zoological Survey had followed Ellerman's Key to the Rodents inhabiting India, Burma and Ceylon (*J. Mammalogy*, Vol. 28, Nos. 3 and 4, 1947, p. 386) which reads:—

'*Fernandoni* resembles *platythrix* in a general way, except for its apparently shortened muzzle, the diastema being normally less than one-quarter of occipito-nasal length.'

He goes on to say that the diastema in the specimen under consideration definitely exceeds the proportion stated above, and that after a careful consideration of all the characters of the specimens he finds no reason to revise the Zoological Survey's identification.

It may also be pointed out that *fernandoni* was originally described from Ceylon and is believed to be restricted to the island.—Eds.]

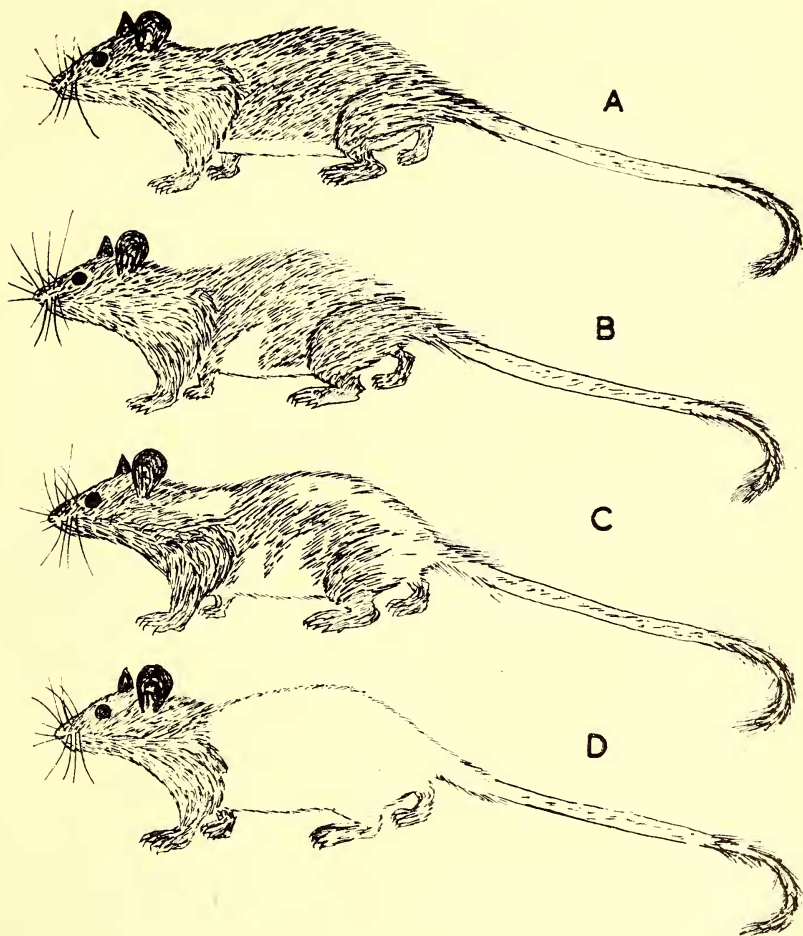
5. ALBINISM IN *RATTUS CREMORIVENTER* (MILLER)

(With 4 text-figures and a map)

Recent correspondence in these pages (48: 579 and 49: 298) has drawn attention to the lack of exact knowledge about the natural occurrence of albinism in rats, and to the doubt which must always exist as to whether its occurrence in house rats can be regarded as natural or due to the release or escape of domestic white rats. It is, therefore, of considerable interest to record the occurrence of partial albinism in a rat which is reasonably certain to be free from any admixture of domestic strains.

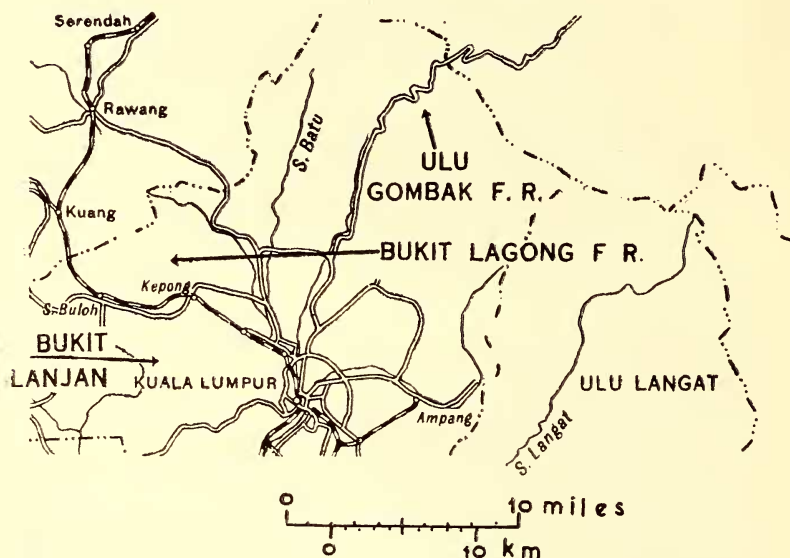
In connexion with work on scrub typhus, a large number of small animals are regularly collected from within a radius of about fifteen

milés of the town of Kuala Lumpur, in the state of Selangor, Malaya. Among other habitats, a number of forest reserves are trapped, and in these is to be found an arboreal rat *Rattus (Maxomys) cremoriventer*. This rat is strictly arboreal and therefore quite different in habits to *Rattus (Rattus) norvegicus* to which the white domestic rats belong. The possibility of hybridisation with an arboreal forest rat of a different subgenus is therefore so remote as to be safely ignored.



The rat is normally brown with a white or yellowish belly, as shown in the drawing (text figure A). In the Selangor specimens the belly is typically white. Of the 87 rats of this species trapped during 1949 and 1950, however, 32 have shown an extension of the white up onto the flanks. In most specimens the extension consisted merely of a band of white on one or both sides as shown in fig. B, but in four specimens the white has been much more extensive, appearing as patches on the back such as is shown in fig. C.

In a fifth specimen the white was uniform over the whole of the hinder part of the body, leaving only the head and shoulders pigmented (fig. D). This specimen was juvenile.



These aberrant specimens were not confined to one locality, but occurred wherever the rat was trapped in any numbers, as is shown in the table and map. Although the numbers are small, the proportion of aberrant rats observed from each locality agree very closely.

TABLE

Collecting area (Forest Reserve)	Total number collected	Number of aberrant specimens				
		Total	Type			
			B	C	D	
Bukit Lagong	72	28	25	2	1	
Ulu Gombak	9	2	2	0	0	
Ulu Langat	5	2	0	2	0	
Bukit Lanjan	1	0	—	—	—	
Total	87	32	27	4	1	

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19th December, 1950.

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LIM BOO-LIAT